

Best I/O computer equipment

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Nearly 10 years ago, I was starting to get shooting pains through my right wrist when typing at the keyboard. This would happen once or twice a week. Soon it spread to both wrists, and increased in frequency. Finally, it became an everyday experience. The pain was brief in duration, but intense--and I would have to quit typing. Carpal tunnel syndrome starting to rear it's ugly head. I started to panic--I'm a computer science teacher--perhaps time to go back to teaching mathematics full time--not something I really wanted to do.

I started to research this on the Internet. It became obvious that the first and easiest thing to try was to get a split keys keyboard, with the two main sections of keys angled like this `//\\\`.

Keyboards

Years ago, I spent over \$100 on a keyboard called the "Darwin Smartboard". Though I use a different brand of keyboard today, the wrist pains ceased almost immediately, and never returned. As I use multiple computers at home and at work, I began the search for an inexpensive alternative. The obvious choice was one of the Microsoft ergonomic keyboards. However, as I became more involved with Linux, and I've watched Microsoft's behavior over the years, I have developed a strong aversion for purchasing anything Microsoft.

I ended up purchasing the Belkin ErgoBoard. Be carefull, Belkin sells two keyboards: "ErgoBoard" and "ErgoBoard Pro". The "ErgoBoard Pro" is crap. The "ErgoBoard" is wonderful. I own four of these, and they're great. Cost is \$23.00 to \$30.00 each.

Mice

I haven't much to say here except Logitech. Find the model that best suits your hands and needs. I'm not much of a gamer, so I haven't experimented with any of the gaming mice out there.

Monitors

OK, at age 57, I'm not seeing quite as well as I used to--I have early onset of cataracts in both eyes (surgery next Summer). I need a big clear monitor. One day, in a computer store, I was comparing 22 inch widescreen LCD monitors. The one with the best display will probably surprise you: A Gateway FPD2275W. It was head and shoulders above the Samsungs and Viewsonics. At \$330 it's no steal, but its clarity is breathtaking. I soon will have two of these, as I just ordered a second one.

Headset

I've been recording some instructional screen-videos this Summer using gtk-recordmydesktop. For this I bought a Plantronics Audio 350 headset. At \$21.99, it's not a high-end set, but the microphone has given me suprisingly good

quality audio. I plan to purchase another.

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